

imprisonment for alleged “hooliganism” and disturbing the peace. Democratic opposition leaders such as Anatoly Lebedka and Vincuk Viachorka have been arbitrarily detained and sentenced to jail terms which have been as much as 15 days. Last month, opposition activists Artur Finkevich received a two-year corrective labor sentence and Mikalay Rozumau was sentenced to three years of corrective labor for allegedly libeling Lukashenka. Other opposition activists, including Syarhey Lyashkevich and Ivan Kruk have received jail sentences of up to six months.

In a patent attempt to discourage domestic observation of the fraudulent March 19 presidential elections, authorities arrested activists of the nonpartisan domestic election monitoring initiative “Partnerstva”—Tsimafei Dranchuk, Enira Branitskaya, Mikalay Astreyka and Alyksandr Shalayka. They have been in pre-trial detention since February 21, charged with participation in an unregistered organization.

Lukashenka's pattern of anti-democratic behavior began a decade ago, and this pattern has only intensified. Through an unconstitutional 1996 referendum, he usurped power, while suppressing the duly-elected legislature and the judiciary. His regime has repeatedly violated basic freedoms of speech, expression, assembly, association and religion. In its May 3 annual report, the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom included Belarus on its watch list, as Belarus appears to be adopting tougher sanctions against those who take part in unregistered religious activity. The democratic opposition, non-governmental organizations and independent media have been subject to intimidation and a variety of punitive measures, including closure. Political activists and journalists have been beaten, detained and imprisoned. Independent voices are unwelcome in Lukashenka's Belarus and anyone who, through their promotion of democracy, would stand in the way of the Belarusian dictator puts their personal and professional security on the line. Their courage deserves our admiration, and, more importantly, our support.

Moreover, we have seen no progress on the investigation of the disappearances of political opponents—perhaps not surprisingly, as credible evidence points at the involvement of the Lukashenka regime in their murders. I welcome President Bush's decision to personally meet with two of the widows in the Oval Office to discuss the situation on Belarus. An Administration report mandated by the Belarus Democracy Act and finally issued on March 17 of this year reveals Lukashenka's links with rogue regimes such as Iran, Sudan and Syria, and his cronies' corruption. Despite efforts by the U.S. Government, working closely with the European Union, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and other European organizations, and non-governmental organizations, the regime of Lukashenka continues its grip on power with impunity and to the detriment of the Belarusian people.

Colleagues, it is my hope that the Belarus Democracy Reauthorization Act of 2006 and efforts by allies in Europe will help put an end to the pattern of clear, gross and uncorrected violations of OSCE commitments by the Lukashenka regime and will serve as a catalyst to facilitate independent Belarus' integration into democratic Europe in which demo-

cratic principles and human rights are respected and the rule of law is paramount. The Belarusian people deserve better than to live under an autocratic regime reminiscent of the Soviet Union, and they deserve our support in their struggle for democracy and freedom.

TRIBUTE TO MR. CHARLES “BUSTER” BOWEN

HON. MARILYN N. MUSGRAVE

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 27, 2006

Mrs. MUSGRAVE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory and courageous patriotism of Mr. Charles “Buster” Bowen. As a navigator on a B-25 Bomber, Mr. Bowen proudly served his country in the Army Air Corps during the Second World War. The sacrifices he made to ensure the liberty and freedom of future generations will never be forgotten.

In the late autumn of 1941, Buster Bowen was a senior studying accounting at the University of Texas. He was undoubtedly eager for graduation and full of enthusiasm for the future. However, like many young men and women of his generation, Mr. Bowen's world was unalterably changed following the attack on Pearl Harbor.

After graduating from the University of Texas in June 1942, Mr. Bowen volunteered for military service. His military career began in the spring of 1943 at Kelley Field near San Antonio, Texas. After completing his training, Mr. Bowen was assigned to the 345th Bombardment Group and sent to the Pacific. In a letter to his concerned mother, Mr. Bowen assured her he was assigned an office job—he didn't mention that his office was a small table under the turret of a B-25 Bomber.

The crews of the 345th frequently flew low-level bombing runs over enemy targets. On one such mission over Formosa on June 15, 1945, a 40 millimeter explosive shell struck the escape hatch of Mr. Bowen's B-25 Bomber. The shrapnel from the shell pierced the fuselage and badly injured Engineer Harold Warnick and Mr. Bowen. Mr. Warnick sustained injuries to his foot and Mr. Bowen to his back. Even after being injured, Mr. Bowen plotted a course to an auxiliary air base in northern Luzon so that Mr. Warnick could receive the medical attention he needed.

For the injuries sustained by Mr. Bowen in June of 1945, he was awarded the Purple Heart. His squadron commander even displayed Mr. Bowen's bloodied shirt in the squad room to emphasize the importance of flight crews wearing the uncomfortable flak jackets.

Following his injuries, Mr. Bowen was taken off flying status, but began flying once again before the end of the war. After hostilities in the Pacific ended, Mr. Bowen was stationed on the northern Japanese island of Hokkaido as part of the American occupation force.

Mr. Speaker, like so many other young members of this Greatest Generation, Mr. Bowen set aside his ambitions and risked his life to ensure the continued freedom of our great nation. I urge my colleagues to join me in recognizing the patriotic service of Mr. Charles “Buster” Bowen.

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT FAMILY FARM ENERGY RELIEF ACT

HON. TOM UDALL

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 27, 2006

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, rising costs tied to current energy prices are adversely impacting family farmers rendering some farms unsustainable. In fact, I have heard from some constituents in my home state of New Mexico who cannot afford to plant crops this year due to energy prices. We are in danger of losing family farms.

That is why I rise today to introduce the Family Farm Energy Relief Act. This legislation proposes to repeal tax incentives to oil and gas companies from the Energy Policy Act of 2005 to instead provide energy rebates to family farmers.

The Energy Policy Act of 2005 provided approximately \$2.633 billion in tax breaks for oil and gas companies over the next 11 years. During times of high gas prices and record profits for oil and gas companies these tax breaks are wholly unnecessary. In fact, the current administration has agreed that they are unnecessary. President Bush recently stated Congress has got to understand that these energy companies don't need unnecessary tax breaks . . . I'm looking forward to Congress to take about \$2 billion of these tax breaks out of the budget over a 10-year period of time. Cash flows are up. Taxpayers don't need to be paying for certain of these expenses on behalf of the energy companies.

The Family Farm Energy Relief Act legislation redirects the monies from the Energy Policy Act to family farmers to help pay the cost of farm diesel over the next three years. Approximately 3.4 billion gallons of farm diesel were sold in the United States in 2004, 35 million gallons to New Mexican farmers and ranchers.

The rebate program gives a tax credit to qualified family farmers equaling 10 percent of yearly farm diesel expenses. Additionally, qualified family farmers who produce biodiesel for sale or personal use would receive an additional 10 cents per gallon credit.

The program will redistribute approximately \$870 million per year in tax credits for farm diesel expenditures and approximately \$8 million per year in tax credits for biodiesel production over three years. Expenditures from this program will not exceed the \$2.633 billion oil and gas tax incentives from the Energy Policy Act.

Mr. Speaker, family farmers and the Agriculture sector have been a staple of the American economy since before we were a nation. Many family farmers already face great obstacles to success and may have already succumbed to large agriculture conglomerates. The Family Farm Energy Relief Act is not meant to be a substitute for the long-term energy solutions we all seek for our Nation. As much as each of us understands the necessity of a comprehensive and balanced approach to energy development, so too should we realize that in every state there are hard-working family farmers whose monthly budgets are being stretched to the breaking point by energy costs. While we must approach this country's energy demand with the willingness to make the tough, long-range choices demanded of

us, it is equally important that we heed the suffering being caused by the current high prices. Let us help ease the increasing burden of fuel costs and help ensure that these farmers remain one of the backbones of our country and our country's economy.

STATEMENT OF INTRODUCTION
HeLP AMERICA ACT

HON. TOM UDALL

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 27, 2006

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, health care promotion programs have the potential to improve health, improve quality of life, reduce health care costs, and boost productivity. Unfortunately, a very small percentage of health care spending is devoted to health promotion. The national investment in prevention is currently estimated to be less than 5 percent of annual health care costs. Our Nation needs a new approach to healthcare—one that puts prevention front and center.

That is why I rise today to introduce the Healthier Lifestyles and Prevention America Act, also known as the HeLP America Act. My legislation is very similar to S. 1074, a bill of the same name, which was introduced by Senator HARKIN. Both Senator HARKIN's bill and my bill are designed to reduce health care costs and improve health outcomes by reorienting our nation's health care system towards prevention, wellness, and self care.

The HeLP America Act is a comprehensive approach to prevention and health promotion. It provides tools and incentives for schools to improve their nutrition programs. It provides tax incentives for employers to implement wellness programs. It provides grants for communities to implement activities to prevent and reduce the incidence of obesity, and chronic diseases associated with this condition. My bill also gives the FDA the authority to regulate tobacco products, and requires nutrition labeling on menus in chain restaurants. These are just a few of the provisions included in the legislation designed to attack the problem of skyrocketing health care costs associated with the increasing rates of obesity, diabetes, and other chronic illnesses.

Adaptable lifestyle factors such as smoking, sedentary lifestyle, poor nutrition, unmanaged stress, and obesity account for approximately half of premature deaths in the United States. Spending on chronic diseases related to lifestyle and other preventable diseases account for an estimated 75 percent of total health care spending. And Mr. Speaker, as you and all of our colleagues know, our nation's total amount of health care spending is no small sum. In fact, according to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, total health care spending in 2004 was \$1.8 trillion. Furthermore Mr. Speaker, CMS estimates that this number will double by 2014. For those keeping score at home, that means in 2014 total health care expenditures will be \$3.6 trillion.

With a greater focus on prevention, we will be able to greatly reduce the number of individuals who suffer from all types of ailments, including diabetes, cancer, heart disease, and strokes just to name a few areas where pre-

ventive health care can make the difference. It will improve health outcomes, improve people's lives, and help cut down on our exploding healthcare expenditures. As is noted in the findings of this legislation, per capita health spending in the United States is 56 percent greater than the median for countries in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. Mr. Speaker, this is unacceptable. We need to get more bang for our healthcare buck and we need to look no further than focusing on prevention. As the saying goes, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in seeking a new and more effective approach to the health of our nation by cosponsoring the HeLP Act.

RECOGNIZING THE STENNIS CONGRESSIONAL INTERN PROGRAM

HON. BART GORDON

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 27, 2006

Mr. GORDON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the participants in the Stennis Congressional Intern Program. For many years, the John C. Stennis Center for Public Service has enhanced the experience of a select group of summer interns working in congressional offices. The interns are provided with an insiders view of Congress through meetings with senior staff members and other experts to discuss the relationships Congress has with the legislative and executive branches, the media, the public and the private sector.

The program is a joint effort of the Stennis Center and a group of current and former senior staff members who serve as Senior Stennis Fellows. These insiders draw on their experience and expertise in creating the program and participating in sessions with the interns.

The outstanding interns selected to participate are chosen based on their college record, community service background and interest in a career in public service. This year, 30 interns, most of them juniors and seniors in college, have been working in personal and committee offices in the House and Senate.

I congratulate these students for being chosen to participate in this exceptional program, and I thank the Stennis Center and the senior fellows for providing such a unique experience for these interns and for encouraging them to consider a future career in public service.

This year's participants are David Benson-Staebler of St. Olaf College, interning in the office of Representative JIM OBERSTAR; Zeke Berzoff-Cohen of Goucher College, interning in the office of Representative JOHN OLIVER; Elizabeth Brady of the University of North Colorado, interning in the office of Senator MIKE ENZI; Tenisha Callender of Loyola University, interning in the office of Representative JAMES MCGOVERN; Paul Cenoz of the University of Southern California, interning in the office of Representative JOHN CAMPBELL; Jessica Cohen of Syracuse University, interning in the office of Senator HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON; Rachel Dillard of Clemson University, interning in the office of Senator JIM DEMINT; Stephanie Dreyer of Boston University, interning in the office of Senator CHARLES SCHUMER; Brittany Erickson of the University of Pennsylvania, in-

terning in the office of Senator KENT CONRAD; David Evans of Wake Forest University, interning in the office of Senator MEL MARTINEZ; Jason Feld of the University of Pennsylvania, interning in the office of Representative LYNN WOOLSEY; Whitney Fogg of Yale University, interning in the office of Representative CONNIE MACK; Clark Fonda of the University of Southern California, interning in the office of Representative JOHN CAMPBELL; Sarah Hackett of Dickinson College, interning in the office of Senator PATRICK LEAHY; JC Hendrickson of American University, interning in the office of Representative MAURICE HINCHEY; Andrew Hill of Vanderbilt University, interning in the office of Representative CHARLIE NORWOOD; Abby Kirkbride of John Brown University, interning in the office of Senator MIKE ENZI; Anne Kouri of Creighton University, interning in the office of Representative RAY LAHOOD; Mark Ladley of The Citadel, interning in the office of Representative ALLYSON SCHWARTZ; Cassandra Long of the University of Central Florida, interning in the office of Senator BILL NELSON; Jonathan Lowrey of Northwest Missouri State, interning in the office of Representative SAM GRAVES; Meghan McCarthy of the College of William and Mary, interning in the office of Representative RUSH HOLT; Chris Nielsen of the University of South Dakota, interning in the office of Senator TIM JOHNSON; Edward Parkinson of the University of Witwatersrand, interning in the House Committee on Homeland Security; Sara Rafferty of the University of Oklahoma, interning in the office of Representative PHIL ENGLISH; Joshua Root of Cornell University, interning in the office of Representative JOHN OLIVER; Eric Sandberg-Zakian of Yale University, interning in the office of Representative RUSH HOLT; Matt Seager of the College of Charleston, interning in the office of Senator PATRICK LEAHY; Eli Sevcik-Timberg of Wesleyan University, interning in the office of Representative MEL WATT; and Elizabeth Tran of Boston University, interning in the office of Representative NEIL ABERCROMBIE.

IN HONOR OF ROY D. HOKE—32 YEARS OF SERVICE AND COMMITMENT

HON. SANFORD D. BISHOP, JR.

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 27, 2006

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a man who has spent the last 32 years of his life serving this body in the Paint Shop. Roy D. Hoke has become a friend of mine and a friend of my office staff. Through his years he has worked to make each and every one of our offices more beautiful—not for us, but for our constituents and honored guests. Rarely have I seen a man more dedicated to his work, and more filled with pride at a job well-done.

He has served in the House under six U.S. Presidents, and 16 sessions of Congress. Prior to his service in the House, Mr. Hoke served America in the U.S. Army in Vietnam.

This year, Roy Hoke has become very close to my staff. My office took part in the Housewide program to refurbish our offices, and Roy played a major role in painting my office. He was always there to make it look perfect. Roy was never satisfied with his job—he